



# THE ACTOR BASE

## CHECKLIST: BURNOUT

There are a number of reasons why actors can suffer 'Burnout' (emotional, motivational, spiritual, physical exhaustion).

Three of the most common factors are:

**Over work:** being consistently subjected to audition/rehearsal/performance demands. This can sound exciting but those who have experienced it, well know the joylessness and fatigue that accompanies this way of living.

**Early work:** there is a trend these days for some actors to start at a very early age. The juggernaut of online and tv streaming as well as the general media over saturation means that the production of new material comes thick and fast, chewing up and spitting out as many young 'stars' as it can. Young actors being thrust into the spotlight via the latest Netflix or Amazon series can become overwhelmed with attention before they are mature enough to deal with it and the inevitable decline in opportunities as time moves on causes depression, burnout and mental health difficulties.

**Lack of work:** perhaps the most commonly experienced issue. A general feeling of powerlessness despite every effort made can trigger depression, anxiety and low level stress which can lead to all sorts of behaviours including alcohol and drug abuse. Often, there are two directions that this actor can take.

1. I can't stand this anymore, I give up – just to save my sanity!
2. I will double, triple my efforts (leading to a deepening of the same sensation).

### Burnout symptoms

- A disinterest in rehearsing or practise.
- A disconnection from cast/classmates and their offerings.
- Failing to warm up prior to performance.
- Awareness of ebbing technique.
- Arriving JUST prior to performance/rehearsal or class.  
Resorting to overeating, drugs or alcohol.

## Combating burnout

- Get plenty of rest and/or sleep. Make this deliberate and 'ritualistic' if you like. Switching off screens, not drinking alcohol prior to bed, go to bed early several nights a week etc.
- Learn to reject work or projects that don't serve a long term career goal and that run the risk of adding more to your plate than you can handle. In essence, conserve creative energy for things that you feel are really worth it.
- Factor in periods of healthy distraction between projects. Days out, city breaks or visiting friends.
- Exercise (of any kind) can reinvigorate and help you feel in control.
- Become part of a community of like minded actors who may share your feelings and encourage you as you, in turn, encourage them.
- Creatively stimulate yourself by watching quality productions and films.
- Develop a second passion that counterbalances your acting journey.